

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 7, 8, 10, and 14-18 have been amended. Claims 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, and 14-18 are currently pending in the application.

On page 2 of the Office Action, claims 3, 10, 16, 17, and 18 were objected to due to alleged "informalities." Applicants respectfully submit that the phrase "... in each of the transmission lines" is correct. In particular, the phrase "each of the transmission lines" has antecedent basis by the phrase "order of transmission lines," in line 8 of claim 3, for example. Therefore, the "transmission lines" referred to in the phrase "each of the transmission lines" refers to the transmission lines in the previous phrase "order of transmission lines." Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the phrase suggested by the Examiner, that is, "in each of the transmission line," is grammatically incorrect, as "each" requires the object of the prepositional phrase to be plural, that is, "transmission lines." In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the objections regarding claims 3, 10, 16, 17, and 18 be withdrawn.

Regarding the phrase "number of nodes executed," Applicants thank the Examiner for bringing the matter to Applicants' attention and have amended the claims as suggested by the Examiner.

On pages 3 and 4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 7, 8, 14, and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,507,565 (Taylor) in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 10327148 A (Jun) and Japanese Patent Publication No. 02-131044 (Takashi).

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claims 1, 7, 8, 14, and 15 are patentable over the references, as none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a control unit selecting nodes associated with a transmission line to be polled based on a comparison of a first ratio and a second ratio, wherein the first ratio is represented by a total number of nodes divided by the number of nodes accommodated by the selected transmission line and said second ratio is represented by the total number of nodes involved in the polling divided by the number of nodes polled in each of the transmission lines, as recited in the currently amended claims.

Taylor is simply concerned with determining a change in status of a node and does not provide detail regarding how polling is accomplished. As Jun also does not provide details regarding polling, Jun does not add any relevant information to Taylor. As Takashi is concerned

with a time interval required for polling, Takashi does not add any relevant information to the combination of references.

Therefore, independent claims 1, 7, 8, and 14-15 are patentable over the references, as none of the references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest the above-identified feature of the claims. As the dependent claims 3-5 and 10 and 12 depend from respective independent claims, the dependent claims are patentable over the references for at least the reasons presented for the independent claims.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

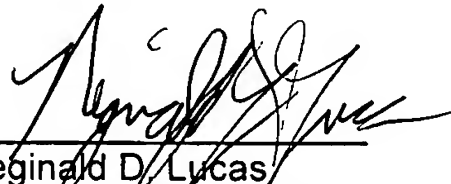
Respectfully submitted,

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